



THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

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JOHN L. BILL
ATTORNEY GENERAL

November 29, 1974

The Honorable John C. Ross
City Attorney
Room 203, City-County Bldg.
El Paso, Texas 79901

Open Records Decision No. 58

Re: Whether copies of blank
forms used by a city must
be produced under the Open
Records Act.

Dear Mr. Ross:

The City of El Paso has received a request for "a specimen copy of each record, card, and report form held by any unit or agency of the city government." Responsive to this request and pursuant to section 7(a) of the Texas Open Records Act, Article 6252-17a, V. T. C. S., you ask the following questions:

1. Is a blank form a public record as defined in § 2(2) of Article 6252-17a?
2. Must the city comply with a blanket request for any and all forms which the city may have in use, or must the applicant specifically designate the form and information which he is seeking?

"The purpose of the Open Records Act is to enable the public to obtain information as to the manner in which governmental bodies perform the duties that have been delegated to them." art. 6252-17a, § 1. Open Records Decision No. 50 (1974). The Act designates as public information "all information collected, assembled, or maintained by governmental bodies . . . in connection with the transaction of official business . . ." V. T. C. S., art. 6252-17a, § 3(a). Section 6(a)(9) of the Act specifically makes public ". . . descriptions of forms available or the places at which forms may be obtained, and instructions as to the scope and contents of all papers, reports or examinations."

We believe that the questions asked by a governmental body in connection with official business, are public information within the contemplation of the

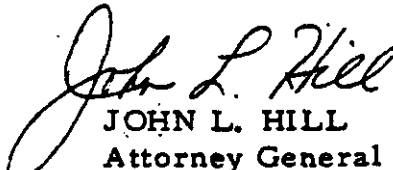
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Open Records Act, and in the absence of an applicable exception, the forms must be disclosed.

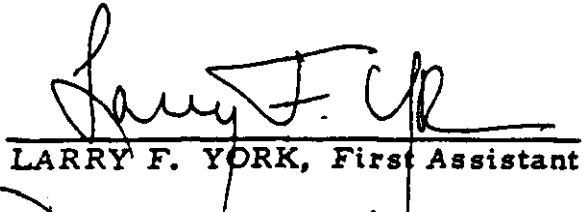
Your second question is whether the City must comply with a blanket request, as opposed to a specific one. In Open Records Decision No. 31 (1974), we said that "we believe it is incumbent upon the agency to make a good faith effort to attempt to identify such records as might fit the request and then to advise the requestor of the types of documents available so that he may properly narrow his request to specifics."

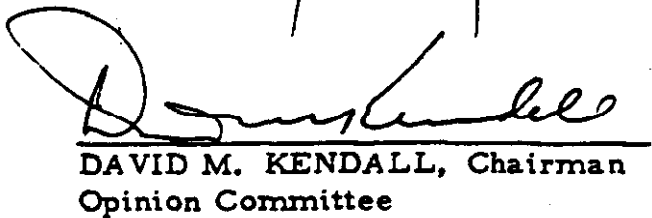
If, in the course of complying with the request, you determine that certain information falls within one of the exceptions of section 3(a), the matter should be submitted to this office in accordance with section 7 of the Act.

Very truly yours,


JOHN L. HILL
Attorney General of Texas

APPROVED:


LARRY F. YORK, First Assistant


DAVID M. KENDALL, Chairman
Opinion Committee